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University Of New Hampshire Students Promote Reading And Leadership

December 16, 2010



A second-grade student at Wilson Elementary School in Manchester reads "Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon" as part of UNH's Community Leadership Program "Reading Makes A Difference."

DURHAM, N. H. – Students in the Community Leadership Program at University of New Hampshire have launched a project that aims to encourage reading and leadership among elementary, middle and high school students.

"Reading Makes a Difference" has UNH students working with public school teachers to identify books that speak to what it means to be a leader, and to successfully face life challenges. After reading a recommended book, the primary and secondary students will then write book reports that will be posted on a blog, allowing them to see their work "in print."

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The blog will be directly connected to the leadership program site and UNH students will offer positive feedback on each student's work. (www.readingmakesadifference.blogspot.com)

The Henry Wilson Elementary in Manchester is the first school to participate in the program. UNH alum Kelly Lyons' second-grade class read "Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon," by Patty Lovell. The story is about a unique girl who embraces her differences and overcomes adversity from a bully.

Wilson Elementary School educates a highly diverse population, welcoming recent immigrants and refugees from many different countries.

"'Reading Makes a Difference' offers them support as they create their own opportunities as future leaders, and encourages them to achieve higher education," said Professor Kate Hanson, who heads up the leadership program at UNH.

Prior to this pilot program, UNH students Halie Olszowy, Hillary O'Brien, and Sam Weinstein made posters and a video to get the participating students excited about interacting with university students. They then joined the second-graders in class to accept the book reviews and to discuss what the students had learned.

"We hope to encourage students from elementary through high school in the discussion of leadership and how reading can help us learn about leadership roles," Hanson said.

Hopes are to grow the project and expand to other schools around the state. Participating students will receive a certificate from the Community Leadership Program, an award-winning undergraduate program at UNH that teaches the foundation skills for community organizing and nonprofit leadership.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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A photo can be downloaded at http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2010/dec/jr14reading.jpg.

Cutline: A second-grade student at Wilson Elementary School in Manchester reads "Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon" as part of UNH's Community Leadership Program "Reading Makes A Difference."

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T-hall

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